

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The foregoing amendment is presented for the purpose of placing the application in condition for allowance, or alternatively, in better condition for appeal.

A one-month extension of time, together with the associated fee, is filed herewith. The claims remaining in the application after entry of the foregoing amendment are: 1, 2 and 4.

The minor informalities noted by the Examiner in paragraph 7, on page 3, of the Final Official Action have been attended to.

The indication in the Final Office Action as to the allowability of the subject matter of Claim 3 is noted with appreciation. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of Claim 3 and clarifying that the pure superheated water vapour is the drying gas and further that optionally an inert drying gas can also be present.

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102, as anticipated by the international published application of *Abraham* (WO 01/25416). The *Abraham* patent shows a process which involves the spray drying of an aqueous composition containing an alkali metal sulfide and creating a series of inert gas streams wherein the first gas stream is heated to a temperature of 275°C to 500°C and the second inert gas stream contains the inert gas of the first inert gas stream, solid particulate anhydrous metal sulfide and water in the form of vapour or gas. See, pg. 9 of the WO 01/25416 document, beginning at line 15. A third inert gas stream may also be involved in the process of *Abraham*.

In contrast, applicants' method involves using pure superheated water vapour as the drying gas which can optionally contain an inert drying gas.

Claim 1 has been amended to conform to the subject matter that is indicated on page 11 of the Final Office Action as being allowable. Therefore, Claims 1 and 2 should be allowed.

All other issues are believed to be moot.

In view thereof, favorable action at the Examiner's earliest convenience is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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